

Village of Morton Comprehensive Plan 2008
Public Meeting – 19 February 2008
Preliminary Findings and Recommendations

X₁= Land Use, Public Buildings and Village Infrastructure

- Land Use Key Finding:
 - Land use map recently updated – only a few changes are required
- Preliminary Recommendations:
 - Change zoning of some land between Detroit & I-155 from Industrial to Commercial, and encourage industrial development W of I-155
 - Consider annexing property on Rt. 150 E to Washington Blacktop in anticipation of an eventual interchange with I-74. Designate area around the interchange as Commercial.
 - Facilitate a “walkable community” – plan for small-to-medium Commercial development within walking distance of Residential areas
 - Green space, walking/bike trails should be part of or associated with all new development
 - Explore “screening” for “back-side” appearance of structures backing up to I-74 & I-155
 - Develop concept of “Entrances” to Morton (150, S Main, Birchwood, Queenwood, etc.
 - Explore “Ring Road” for Morton, ways for traffic to go E-W or N-S through town without having to go through Main & Jackson
 - Promote/enhance growth of Downtown Business District
 - Coordinate location of new schools with School District 709 to promote “smart growth” in the Village.
- Public Buildings Key Findings:
 - Village Hall is at capacity, more capacity is needed
 - Fire Station at Adams and Plum insufficient to meet future needs
 - The new Police Station on Detroit is adequate to meet needs
- Public Buildings Short-term Recommendations:
 - Village Hall: evaluate new building, preferably on a “campus” of public buildings to include, tourism, Park District, Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Community Foundation, etc.
 - Plan for construction of new fire station and headquarters
- Public Buildings Longer-term Recommendations:
 - Construct at least one satellite fire station to meet needs of growing community
 - Cooperating with other taxing bodies, evaluate need for a Morton Community Center
 - Coordinate long-term planning for Pumpkin Festival Fairgrounds
- Infrastructure Key Findings:
 - Infrastructure is in excellent condition
- Infrastructure Short-term Recommendations:
 - General: Continue existing infrastructure programs and improve them to assure infrastructure condition does not decline
 - Implement short-term recommendation from recent Traffic Study
 - Extend W. Courtland to Veterans Rd; Courtland east to Harding
 - Develop/implement schedule for timely replacement of streets
 - Upgrade connector streets for Village “ring road”

- Infrastructure Longer-term Recommendations:
 - Implement long-term recommendations from recent Traffic Study
 - Plan and lobby for new interchange with I-74 east of Morton and for Eastern By-pass/Ring Road for Central Illinois
 - Implement current plans to update, upgrade & expand water and sewer systems
 - Maintain ownership and efficient operation of Gas Utility
- **Contact:**
 Steve Newhouse snewhouse@morton-il.gov
 Roger Spangler rspangler@morton-il.gov

X₂= Economic Development

- Key Findings:
 - Preliminary report includes five pages of recommendations, too many to cover here. Project Goals and key recommends include:
- Create a diverse, stable, sustainable and thriving economy which is compatible with and enhances Morton
 - Communications, publicity, enhancing image, encourage tourism
- Retain and expand existing businesses in Morton
 - Hire EDC Director; work w/ businesses to identify and solve challenges; promote Enterprise Zone; create 2nd “entry point” of commercial & retail at Birchwood and Detroit
- Attract appropriate new businesses to Morton in a manner that provides for manageable, smart and sustainable growth and that maintains a sense of community identity.
 - “Business development kit”; data base of available sites; Econ Development section on Village website; “industrial park”; etc.
- Have the downtown area serve as a vibrant community and economic center.
 - Incentives to refurbish, reinvest? Review zoning ordinances; explore creation of Downtown Business Zoning District
- Provide a business-friendly environment and positive business climate
 - Benchmark other communities; review ordinances; regular surveys & interviews; “brand image” and logo for Morton
- **Contact:**
 Jim Benckendorf jbenckendorf@benckendorf.com

X₃= Schools and Education

- No update available at press time
- **Contact:**
 Dr. Roger Kilpatrick roger.kilpatrick@morton709.org
 Linda Menold 266-5724

X₄= Parks and Recreation

- Key Findings:
 - Current Parks and Receptions facilities and programs meet national standards and the needs of Morton’s citizenry
 - Some enhancements needed as the Village grows

- Best way to increase recreational facilities in Morton is to incorporate them with a new High School Campus
- Recommendations:
 - Better access to parks and schools by way of bike paths and sidewalks
 - Extensive recommendations are made for specific routes
 - Work w/ Village to develop “green space” in future developments, both residential and commercial
 - Work w/ schools to develop additional facilities (e.g., indoor and outdoor pools, tennis courts, band shell, basketball courts, walking paths, an indoor activity center, etc.)
 - Enhance publicity and promotion of current programs
 - Modify programs based on demographic and seasonal needs
 - Consider creative funding sources other than direct tax revenue
- **Contact:**
Gary Watson 263-7429

X₅= Library Services

- Key Findings:
 - High level of satisfaction with building, collection, services and especially STAFF
 - Current building meets standards for population of 20,000
 - Tax base provides sufficient resources to maintain services
 - Use of technology to deliver library services is a strength
- Short-term Recommendations:
 - Consider installing drive-up return/drive-through window
 - Allow on-line reservation of materials
 - Allow self check-out
 - Communications via e-mail
 - Consider additional service hours, e.g., Sunday afternoons
- Longer-term Recommendations:
 - Continue hiring and training strategies to support staff excellence
 - Develop Succession Plan for library staff and administration
 - Maintain leadership in terms of use of technology
 - Maintain physical plant and furnishings
 - Consider expanding the Library District to include all areas served by Morton Unit School District 709
- **Contact:**
Janice Sherman mortonlibrary@hotmail.com

X₆= Streets, Highways and Bikeways

- Key Findings:
 - Recommendations on Streets and Highways are incorporated in those of Team #1, “Land Use, Public Buildings and Infrastructure”
 - Recommendations related to Bikeways are incorporated with those of Team #1 and also Team #4, “Parks and Recreation”

X₇= Technology

- Recommendations:
 - Morton needs a “Home Page”, and the Village should take the lead to sponsor & coordinate among businesses, civic groups, other taxing bodies and not-for-profit orgs
 - Develop and implement a system strategy for GIS (Geographic Information System) for mapping, public info, emergency plan
 - Village should *not* create a Wi-Fi utility, due to rapidly changing technology; needs will be met by cable/telephone/cellular companies
 - Village needs to upgrade its own computer installation, service, maintenance and in-house capabilities
- **Contact:**
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Steve Leitch sleitch@morton-il.gov

X₈= Emergency Response Planning

- Key Findings:
 - Police, Fire, Paramedic and Public Works departments are well suited and trained to address routine tactical issues
 - Resources to develop and exercise plans for extended or high-impact emergencies are *not* available on current staff
 - Community resources and training to assist in these emergencies have not been defined or performed
- Short-term Recommendations:
 - Comply with the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
 - Implement improved warning sirens, with solar backup and voice
 - Investigate technology to send emergency messages to citizens
 - Develop plan for high probability/high impact emergencies
 - Develop list of resources needed to support such a plan
 - Identify at-risk groups; review their internal plans and train
 - Analyze Incident Command Structure; staff to meet needs
- Longer-term Recommendations:
 - Establish schedule to exercise High Impact Event plans
 - Review and update all plans at least every two years
- **Contact:**
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Joe Kelly jkelly@morton-il.gov

X₉= Morton’s Role in the Region, State & Nation

- Key Findings:
 - Morton is already involved in a number of regional associations, studies and initiatives; while not widely publicized, Morton *is* being represented and participating
- Short-term Recommendations:
 - **Transportation:**
 - Conduct Morton survey to assess interest in participating in regional transportation study

- **“Triangle of Opportunity”:**
- Initiative underway for smaller communities to participate/cooperate on a number of regional issues
- **Much more work to do:**
- This team has only recently started its deliberations; these are still “early days” for this team
- **Contact:**
Susan Pyles spyles@morton-il.gov

X₁₀= Health, Wellness and Senior Services

- Key Findings:
 - Needs of elderly should be addressed by *all* teams
- Recommendations:
 - **Housing:**
 - There is a growing need for senior-oriented housing/condos
 - Investigate incentives to encourage developers
 - Planned activities to be included as part of development
 - **Senior Services:**
 - Improve awareness of services so more people can use them
 - Coordinate opportunities for seniors to volunteer their services
 - **Health and Wellness:**
 - With the Morton Ministerial Assoc., explore “parish nurse” concepts to promote senior wellness
- **Contact:**
Mark Johnson mjohnson@mtco.com

General:

- Copies of team reports and presentation materials used tonight will be available at
www.morton-il.gov
- Paper copies of all team reports may also be obtained during regular library hours at:
Morton Public Library
315 W Pershing Street
Morton, IL 61550